ECATS Training Approach and Guidelines for Selecting LEA-Level Trainers

PCG will provide intensive training to NCDPI and designated "Certified LEA Expert Trainers" for each module, who will then function as trainers and mentors for other staff members within their own individual district. PCG recommends that each district carefully select "Certified LEA Expert" representatives who are comfortable with technology and who will be champions for their local users. These individuals will serve as a district-level system administrator and as key contacts for colleagues; they will be integral to enhancing acceptance of the new system.

We have highlighted 5 ideal characteristics for trainers selected to serve as "Certified LEA Experts":

1. Technologically savvy – Should be comfortable and adept at using software/web-based programs.
2. Secure in content knowledge – Should have experience in their module-specific area: Special Education, Service Documentation and/or MTSS.
3. Able to be an advocate for change – Will encourage and promote system use.
4. Well spoken – Communication skills are key, must be able to accurately convey system information and explain functionality.
5. Eager to learn – ECATS is a new platform and trainers will need to be ready to absorb a great deal of information!

Training sessions conducted by Certified LEA Expert Trainers within each district should include both instructor-led demonstration and hands-on time in the application followed by question and answer forums. Depending on the module, training time will typically vary from three to six hours. Trainees may be required to bring documents with them that will be used during the training session to complete exercises. For example, during the Special Education training, trainees will be asked to bring a sample Individualized Education Plan to the training session.

All Certified LEA Expert Trainers will receive training on system functionality, effective training techniques, training videos for use during training sessions, training scripts and recommended agendas for training sessions, training manuals, and Quick Reference Guides.

In a large district, it may be necessary to have Special Education LEA Expert Trainers train all Special Education School-Level Experts, who then return to their schools to conduct individual school-level trainings. Another model for a larger district to consider would be to have an identified group of LEA Special Education Facilitators who are trained by the Special Education LEA Expert Trainers, and these LEA Special Education Facilitators then divide the number of Special Education Teachers district-wide to conduct an adequate number of training sessions to cover all Special Education Teachers, even if these are not individual school trainings.

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Special Education Directors. Special education directors will be trained by LEA Expert Trainers to effectively manage compliance issues within their individual LEA. Key Performance Indicators, such as number of annual reviews due by a specific date or overdue date violations, will be accessed via a system dashboard. This group of users will be trained to manage and monitor their staff and use reports to provide data to help districts manage capacity planning and human resources. Through training, Special Education Directors will be equipped with the knowledge to take corrective actions more effectively where needed.

School Administrators. LEA Expert Trainers will train principals and other school administrators to efficiently manage compliance issues within their building. School-level reports will allow principals to manage capacity planning and human resources more easily. Principals will then be equipped with knowledge to effectively take corrective action when needed.

Special Education School-Level Experts or LEA Special Education Facilitators. The individuals are ultimately responsible for training all Special Education Teachers and Case Managers on the system and will receive comprehensive and practical training in using the system to create IEPs and schedule team member and parent participation throughout the IEP process. Through these training sessions, they will also understand the key roles that their team members will play in the special education process.

Service Providers. Related service clinicians will be trained on portions of the system relevant to their specific job responsibilities, including duties such as adding goals, objectives, and services to student IEPs and logging related service logs. Training will also provide an understanding of how to log services via the EasyTrac Logging Wizards and how to view service logs.

Other Users. Data Managers at the School or District Level, District-level Student Services administrators, etc.